

Emily MacDonald
242 Wainsley Place
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Dear Nathaniel Hawthorne,

You are dead. You died in the nineteenth century, over two hundred years ago, but you are still remembered because of a book you wrote based on the seventeenth century. Knowing this, it's amazing how relevant *The Scarlet Letter* still is to many lives even today. As such a classic novel, (and a required reading piece for eleventh grade AP classes at my high school and probably many other schools in the country, if not the world) many people have devoted their time to this piece of fiction. You certainly deserve the praise your novel has earned, and it isn't as though I don't appreciate a good romance myself.

I think one reason your novel is so well-received is because it is relatable to many. When Hester is given the scarlet letter and her "adulterer" title, she accurately describes the struggle many people go through with labels. Although these days, people are more concerned with labels such as "obese", "emo", "homosexual", "ugly", and things of that sort, the people wearing these invisible labels still face a rejecting and merciless society who punishes them for what they have done. People have become more understanding in the past two hundred years, but there is still mistreatment. However, being able to see how Hester powers through and overcomes the discouragement is inspiring.

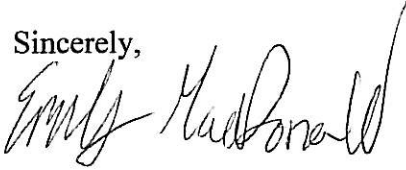
My sister has Asperger's Syndrome, which basically means she behaves differently and learns at a slower pace than other "normal" people. She's been teased and judged for something she can't help, her disease acting as her scarlet letter. You understand how disgusting it is that people will judge someone based on their actions, but in the end you had the townspeople begin to like Hester. They realized that she was a kind person and that she should not have been defined by her crime. I wish my peers would realize the same thing about my sister: that her quirks and differences are not something that should be judged, but rather something that add to who she is as an individual. It took seven, painful years for Hester to stop being an outcast. What I can't understand is why my classmates can't accept my sister when she's known them for eleven years and has done nothing wrong.

Your book made me understand where I stand in my life when it comes to my sister. I used to be her Pearl in a sense. I was a nuisance and pushed her boundaries and reminded her she was different, but at the same time I loved her unconditionally. I still do, of course, but I no longer have that childhood innocence that Pearl did. I don't tease her anymore when she does something a bit different, and I try my hardest to protect her when someone else does. I went from being Pearl to becoming what Hester was to Dimmesdale. I donned the title as her sister and took the onslaught of questions and comments about my sister while she fought the personal demons of Asperger's without feeling judged by outsiders.

I admit, I used to be embarrassed to call myself her sister. Hearing about her outbursts caused me to cringe, but after reading *The Scarlet Letter*, I've begun to

understand how being isolated has been affecting her. Now, I'm determined to tear away her scarlet letter, and any others I find people to be sporting. There's no reason for them to feel shame, and for whatever it is worth as you rest in your grave, I want to thank you for helping me realize that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Emily MacDonald". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Emily MacDonald